

CITY OF HIDDEN HILLS
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

City Hall

Monday, February 12, 2007

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Hidden Hills was duly held in the Council Chambers at the City Hall, 6165 Spring Valley Road, Hidden Hills, California 91302 on Monday, February 12, 2007 at the hour of 7:30 p.m. Mayor Jim Cohen called the meeting to order and presided thereover after asking Mayor Pro Tem Monty Fisher to lead the Council and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Council:

Mayor Jim Cohen
Mayor Pro Tem Monty E. Fisher
Council Member Steve Freedland
Council Member Stuart E. Siegel

Staff:

City Engineer Dirk Lovett
City Manager Cherie L. Paglia

Mayor Cohen thanked resident David Nussbaum for providing videotaping services for this meeting, after being called upon at the last minute.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Fisher and unanimously carried, it was resolved that the agenda for the February 12, 2007 regular meeting be approved as submitted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Cohen made the following announcements:

City Hall, the Building Department, and the Community Center will all be closed and there will be no inspections this coming Monday, 2/19, in honor of Presidents' Day.

Tuesday, 2/20, is the last day to register to vote for the City's General Municipal Election to be held on March 6th; absentee ballots can be requested through Tuesday, 2/27.

Happy Valentine's Day to everyone (2/14).

Congratulations to the Community Association for a very successful Valentine Musicale this past weekend; the event is normally led by David and Bonnie Frank, who do a wonderful job.

Council Member Siegel added that the 10th annual Musicale, "Grey Grease", was a huge success at which everyone had a wonderful time, including his wife Peggi who was a performer. He added that the Association funds the event, with all ticket proceeds being donated to different charities.

AUDIENCE

L.A. County Sheriff's Deputy Mike Shapiro introduced himself as the new STAR Deputy for Round Meadow and other Las Virgenes Schools, addressing the Council as follows:

He has been with the Department for twenty years, working different assignments; he lives in Santa Clarita with his family, and also serves on the governing board of his local School District; he invited the Council to attend any of his classes; he is usually at Round Meadow two times per month, for one fourth grade and one fifth grade class.

Council Member Siegel asked about Deputy Shapiro's activities when not in the classroom. Deputy Shapiro responded as follows:

He teaches more classes in some of the schools; he interacts with the children during recess to get to know them better, and so they can know him (and other Deputies) on a different level, making Sheriff personnel seem less frightening; the principals often use STAR deputies as another source to help counsel children; he is at a school every day, as he has seven schools in the Las Virgenes District and one in the Newhall District; he does work five days a week.

Mayor Cohen thanked Deputy Shapiro and invited him to come to any meeting at any time.

Resident Bret Katz informed everyone that a meeting took place last week to look at new technology to possibly provide better cell phone coverage throughout the City, and that hopefully there would be more detailed information to present at the next Council meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

**Variance No. V-368
5747 Hoback Glen Road
Swimming Pool, Spa and Slide in Rear Yard Setback**

Council Member Freedland reported visiting the site, with the other Council Members stating they had not been to the site but were familiar with the property.

City Engineer Dirk Lovett provided the following staff report:

Notices of the public hearing were posted and mailed to all those property owners within 500'; no comments were received; the proposed improvements require a variance as they will encroach 15' into the rear yard setback, due to limitations on the lot; the lot is irregular in shape, the pad is in the front, the back drops off steeply, and there is a septic system on the pad; to place the pool in any other location would require the owner to remove the septic system and connect to the sewer; however, the nearest sewer line is over 275' away, across private property, or 1600' away if the connection is made through the street; there is an existing berm in the back which would screen the pool from the adjacent bridle trail and properties to the rear; in order to grant the variance, the Council would need to make four required findings; staff feels all of these findings can be made, and would recommend approval of the variance and proposed resolution, with the

condition that the pool, spa, and slide shall be no higher in elevation than the existing berm adjacent to the bridle trail at the rear of the property.

Mayor Cohen opened the public hearing, at which time Michael Stoller, the applicant, stated that he felt Mr. Lovett explained the situation very well, but he would be more than happy to answer any questions the Council might have.

Council Member Freedland asked for clarification regarding property lines and trees in relation to the bridle trail and to what was shown on the plans. Once that was clear to everyone and it was pointed out that no retaining walls were to be built and there were no existing trees in the trail, Council Member Freedland stated that due to the berm, which was probably 6' on the low side and 10' on the high side, there would be minimal impact as no one could see into the backyard. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher and Council Member Siegel agreed and had no objections to the variance request.

Mayor Cohen, suggesting that it was in the City's best interests for other purposes to try to eliminate septic tanks within the City whenever possible, wondered what the cost would be for the applicant to connect to the sewer. City Engineer Lovett provided a rough estimate of \$123,000 to connect via the street route, with the applicant's estimate being \$150,000. Mr. Lovett added that to go the 275' straight across private property would be very difficult to estimate, as the physical improvements alone could run \$40,000 without any landscaping, and that did not take into consideration the difficulty of getting construction equipment in to do the work. In response to further questions by Mayor Cohen, Mr. Lovett explained that many of the homes in that area were on septic systems. Mr. Stoller added that the existing sewer line only extends about half way up Hoback Glen.

Council Member Freedland felt it would be onerous to require someone to spend that much money to connect to a sewer line 1600' away, with Mayor Cohen and the other Council Members agreeing.

As there were no further comments, Mayor Cohen closed the public hearing. Upon MOTION of Council Member Freedland, seconded by Council Member Siegel and unanimously carried, it was resolved to make the required findings to approve Variance No. V-368 with the condition that the pool, spa, and slide be no higher in elevation than the existing berm adjacent to the bridle trail at the rear of the pad, and to approve by title only Resolution No. 795 entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HIDDEN HILLS SITTING AS THE PLANNING AGENCY APPROVING A REQUEST FOR VARIANCE NO. V-368 FOR A SWIMMING POOL, SPA AND POOL SLIDE IN THE REAR YARD SETBACK LOCATED AT 5747 HOBACK GLEN ROAD.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. City Council Minutes – January 22, 2007**
- B. Demand List**

The City Manager pointed out the \$12,000 deposit on the demand list which was required in order to secure rides and games for this year's Fiesta date of September 29th. Upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Fisher and unanimously carried on roll call vote, it was resolved to approve items A and B of the consent calendar as submitted.

MATTERS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

- A. Discussion Regarding Fiesta Related Costs**

Mayor Cohen invited the Fiesta chairman from the last several years, Lisa Moriarity, to discuss the Fiesta budget and offer any suggestions or comments for the future. Ms. Moriarity commented as follows:

She will not be the chairman this year, but she would recommend that the deposit for the rides and games not be paid until someone can look into the possibility of obtaining the rides and games from another company; she felt that when a company is used for several years, that company often loses interest in providing the best service; last year, some of the rides the City requested were not available or were broken, and the prizes for the game booths were very low quality; it is possible that the company that provided just one ride last year, the bumper cars, might be able to give the City bigger and better rides at a

better cost for this year's Fiesta; some of the other costs do increase slightly every year, such as those for the tent, tables, chairs, electricity, etc.; she thought some money could be saved on maintenance costs by asking the company who provides the rides and games to provide people for cleanup and include that in the overall cost; costs in general could be cut, but that would result in less being provided, and that would not seem to be something the Council would want to do as there are expectations of what will be provided every year; once people are used to that level, it is hard to take things away.

The Council agreed that it would be difficult to make the Fiesta less than what the residents are now used to and enjoy. Council Member Siegel asked Ms. Moriarity if she would be willing to handle just this aspect of the Fiesta – obtaining proposals for the rides and games from the company(ies) she thought could do a good job. His only concern was that this be addressed immediately, as the City did not want to end up with nothing for the selected date, which is the last weekend in September. Ms. Moriarity agreed, and will try to have proposals ready for the next Council meeting on 2/26/07.

Ms. Moriarity then had several questions relating to trash collection within the City. The City Manager explained that each resident was required to have three different containers, one each for trash, recycling, and green waste, as none of these waste streams are to be mixed. However, it is up to the resident to decide what size container he/she wants to use for each of the waste streams. The City Manager suggested Ms. Moriarity call the staff if she was having any problems that could not be worked out with the trash hauler.

B. Report from 1/23/07 Las Virgenes Malibu Council of Governments Meeting

Council Member Siegel reported the following:

The COG has authorized the preparation by the Park Service of an areawide trails map; hopefully once that is completed, in several months, he can again raise the issue of the lack of directional signs on the Ahmanson Ranch; the COG held an earthquake tabletop emergency exercise at the end of last November, but is now planning a fully functional exercise during which an Incident Command Post will be opened, and each of the City's Emergency Operation Centers activated; this should be a good test of communications and be very beneficial to the COG cities – another good example of why the COG was originally formed; he also helped to establish a quorum at a recent L.A. City Selections

Committee meeting at which two representatives from this area were finally appointed to the MTA Board.

Council Member Freedland informed the Council that his son was beginning his Eagle Scout community project, which would involve improving the almost non-existent signage on Ahmanson. They have talked to Ranger Walt Young, who put them in contact with another Ranger.

MATTERS FROM STAFF

A. Tentative Map 63567 (Ashley) - Update

City Engineer Dirk Lovett stated that there was nothing new to report at this time.

B. Discussion Regarding Landscape Plans for Round Meadow/Mureau Corner

The following staff report was provided by City Engineer Dirk Lovett:

The final drawings, based on the conceptual drawings and input from the City Council, have been received; that design appears to be what was requested; some changes were made based on previous suggestions; the gazebo is now all white with a metal roof; all of the furniture is now shown as redwood to match the furniture at City Hall; the plans are complete with construction documents and engineering cost estimates, so they are ready for bids; the cost estimate is \$193,000; the designer had the plans reviewed by different architects and landscapers, so feels that the costs are what would be expected; the City also asked another landscape contractor to look at the plans and estimates; this contractor felt that although some of the unit costs were a bit high and others a bit low, that the cost estimate was in the ballpark; the Council has several options; the plans could be accepted as is and staff authorized to obtain construction bids; if the Council does not wish to spend that much money on this project, some of the elements could be revised or eliminated, and the plans could be revised accordingly; the scope of work could be reduced and a specific budget provided, with the designer to redraft the plans according to the budget; either of these last two options would result in additional costs for the designer, based on \$100 per hour.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher wondered what the life expectancy of the full project would be, especially since it is in a very public area. Mr. Lovett said that would be hard to say, but there would be ongoing costs mostly related to maintenance – the redwood (not subject to dry rot or termites)

should last fairly long, if routinely treated; the landscaping and rocks should last a long time; some plants would have to be replaced, and there would be ongoing maintenance costs for irrigation/sprinklers.

In response to Council Member Freedland, the City Manager reported that the City should have approximately \$18,800 in TDA bicycle/pedestrian funds by June, and that the City has been receiving \$5000 per year for the last several years. She added that the funds can be used for the design or for purchase of equipment, but that any project has to be submitted and approved by the fund administrator, who determines if the project meets the requirement standards. TDA funds were used to purchase the redwood furniture for City Hall, and also have been used for maintenance of that equipment.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher raised the issue of the possible placement of a hub on this corner in relation to improvements for cell phone coverage, and would not want to spend money to put in improvements if there was the possibility that they would be removed in the future.

Council Member Siegel commented as follows:

He thought the original idea was just to landscape this corner; does the Council really want to create a gathering place outside the City; he did not understand why the furniture, gazebo, and pathway were necessary; it would be great if the corner were inside the City where it would benefit the residents, but he can only see negatives, not positives, at this corner; the plans and improvements would only facilitate people getting to an area where they cannot walk anyway; this would be creating an unsafe situation; the improvements would have no connection to any bicyclists; he does want to go forward, but not with all the furniture; he is not sure why the furniture was added to begin with.

The City Manager explained that if the Council wished to use TDA funds in that location, those funds can only be used for bicycle and pedestrian facilities or amenities. The bike rack, benches, table, and pathway do not have to be there if the Council does not want them, but that would eliminate the ability to use the TDA funds.

Resident Bret Katz stated that Mureau Road is a major thoroughfare for bicyclists, and wondered if the plans included a drinking fountain. Mr. Lovett explained that although many cyclists do travel through that area, Mureau Road was not officially designated as a bicycle pathway, but that Calabasas has plans to do just that.

Mayor Cohen added his thoughts:

In looking at the plans, the cost estimates show \$22,000 for the shelter and amenities, \$18,500 for installation, \$9000 to remove the soil (maybe it could be given away to someone – neighbors, LVUSD, developers), and \$19,000 for stamped concrete; looking at these figures, perhaps \$50,000 - \$75,000 could be eliminated; although it would look good, it might not be prudent to include bicycle amenities just to use the available \$18,000, when a lot more than that could be saved by eliminating those amenities; he also wondered if a water pump was necessary.

City Engineer Dirk Lovett explained that the designer spoke to the LVMWD, which resulted in her including the cost for a water pump; however, the water pressure has not been checked, and once it is, if there is more pressure there than originally thought, the water pump could be eliminated.

Council Member Freedland stated the following:

Aesthetically, he believes the corner should be cleaned up and landscaped; he is not opposed to looking at cutting items to reduce the cost \$50,000 - \$60,000, or more if possible; if the other Council Members do not want a gazebo for fear it might become a gathering place, he is certainly open to that discussion, although he does not feel the gazebo would invite vandalism or become a “hang out” area; he has no opposition to a bike pathway, would not be bothered if bicyclists would stop and rest at the site, and thought perhaps a water fountain should be added; if changing the pathway to DG would save money, that would be acceptable; he believes a pathway would make it safer, since people do walk in that area, especially since it is already hard for people to walk outside the front gate area.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher pointed out that DG would need constant maintenance, especially on a slope. Mr. Lovett stated that broom brushed concrete would be about the same cost as the DG.

Council Member Freedland suggested that the ad hoc landscape committee (he and Mayor Cohen) sit down with staff to review the plan, and see what elements or items of the plan could be eliminated or revised, based on this evening's discussion, to reduce the overall cost of the project. He added that once the review was complete, the committee would return to the Council with suggested revisions, at which time the Council could decide to put the project out for bid, or continue discussions. The rest of the Council agreed with that suggestion.

C. Charles Abbott Monthly Report - December

City Engineer Dirk Lovett pointed out that the City is over budget in relation to NPDES and AB939 – at the halfway point of the year, approximately 60% of the budgeted amount has already been spent. He explained that this has been a very active year with environmental issues, especially in relation to the NPDES permit renewal. The report was received and filed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, upon MOTION of Council Member Siegel, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Fisher and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn the regular meeting of February 12, 2007 at 8:21 p.m.

Jim Cohen, Mayor

ATTEST:

Cherie L. Paglia, City Manager/City Clerk